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INFANTILE INSANITY.

From the Annual Report of Dr. Woodward, of the Worcester Lunatic Hospital.

THERE is another class of unfortunate individuals, far more numerous than I had formerly supposed, and much more interesting than idiots,—I refer to **INSANE CHILDREN**.

Since I have been connected with this Hospital, I have been consulted in a number of cases of this description. These little patients have intelligent faces, well-formed bodies, good developments of the head, and active minds. Their movements are free, easy and graceful, many of them are sprightly, even handsome; they are generally restless, irritable and extremely mischievous, and are rarely able to speak. In some cases, as soon as there is any mental development, the peculiar characteristics begin to appear, without any known cause. In other cases, epileptic fits have preceded these peculiarities. In one case the use of instruments in labor was supposed to be the cause; epileptic convulsions probably sometimes arise from difficult parturition. No person familiar with these cases would be likely to mistake them for idiots; they look differently, walk differently, and have different developments of body and mind.

Some of these children have been benefited by medical treatment. One, at the present time under my care for epilepsy, seems to be improving favorably. My attention has recently been particularly directed to this subject as I have been, within a few days, consulted in three different cases, of which the epileptic child, above named, was one. I have strong hope that some of them may be cured, and then instructed. Like other insane persons, there is difficulty in fixing the attention, they move with great rapidity from one thing to another, and are impatient of restraint.

In some such persons particular faculties seem much more active than others. One lad, in whose case I was consulted, was not able to articulate, and of course had never learned to read, but was observing of many things, particularly of mechanical operations, drawing, &c. He has left many traces of his skill on the buildings and fences of his former residence, which are yet to be seen. He has now arrived at manhood, but I have no knowledge of his present condition or of his progress in improvement for the last few years. When a lad, he was extremely mischievous, but sprightly and interesting.

Within a few days I have seen a very interesting case of this description, a girl 12 years old, who has a well-formed head, an intelligent and handsome face, a bright black eye, and easy and graceful manners. She is respectful and obedient in her conduct, gentle and affectionate in her temper and disposition, and usually quiet and unobtrusive, but is easily excited, impatient when urged to do anything disagreeable to her, and if opposed utters a scream, but cannot articulate. She constantly hurries from one thing to another, and, like the insane, wants a safety valve to let off her excitement. She is excessively fond of music, would listen with apparent delight to the tones of a piano, seemed to have an irresistible desire to perform herself, and would strike the keys with eagerness and great satisfaction. In her visit to me she would seize the bellows which hung in the room, and blow them with great effort and apparent delight. She is perpetually active, but is far less mischievous than formerly. She has very little power of attention, and has, as yet, never been taught. I have referred the case to my friend, Dr. Howe, whose great success in a case apparently far more forbidding, is universally known, and I am happy to say he is interested in it, and I have no doubt will find his active benevolence excited when he shall see her.

A child 2 years old was lately brought to me at the request of the family physician, who had consulted me respecting it. It is unable to sit, to use its limbs, or talk, its face is intelligent, by no means idiotic. It has powers of mimicry unequalled by any child of its age I have ever met with. Having understood that it would imitate its father in whatever motions he made, I tried some experiments with it, and was astonished and amused to find it copy my movements so exactly, and that, too, with the most roguish expression conceivable, apparently much delighted.

I have now the case formerly alluded to under my care for epilepsy, which, for some months, has been severe and of frequent recurrence. This child has an intelligent face, and a good development of the head, except that it is small. Its form is graceful, and its movements easy and natural. Since it commenced the use of remedies, it has been more quiet and tranquil, less mischievous, sleeps better, has fewer fits, and they are less severe. If the epilepsy can be cured in this case, and I think it may be, I shall have great confidence that, under the care of its excellent mother, it may be taught to articulate, and finally be educated. Indeed, since I have seen this interesting child some effort has been made to teach it to talk, and with some little success.

What has struck me as particularly worthy of remark in all these cases is, that while some of the faculties of the mind are active and many of them capable of improvement, others are torpid or perverted, bearing, in this particular, much resemblance to certain cases of insanity.

I have been consulted quite recently in a case of insanity which commenced in infancy, and has continued in some degree to this time, now twenty years. When an infant, this young man had epileptic fits; these did not continue long, and the child was apparently healthy, sprightly,

and intelligent, till 8 years of age or upwards, and learnt as well as other children. He then became affected with *false vision*, *saw spiders*, and *other vermin*, crawling over him and all about him, and particularly in his food, so that it was with difficulty that he could be prevailed on to eat. This delusion continued for some time. At that time, now ten or twelve years, I was consulted in the case, and prescribed some remedies. The delusion left him after a while, and he has since been in most respects better, is able to work, but not to learn much, although his mind seems not to be particularly inactive. He is talkative and inquisitive in an unusual degree, asks childish questions, but is inattentive to the answers, and not profited by the information which he obtains. He is able to read and write some, but has not been able to acquire much knowledge. The present winter he has attempted to acquire some additional learning; commenced going to school and gave his attention to arithmetic; he made but little progress, and soon began to complain of his head, and confusion of thought, finally ceased to speak, because he says he could not speak right. For five or six weeks he has been almost constantly mute, speaking only occasionally. Since that time he has twice run away from his home, and wandered he knew not where, was lost and confused in his mind.

When he returned home the first time, he was greatly rejoiced to see his friends, and to get back again. When found the second time, he was brought to me, to be placed under my care; his vision is not now disturbed, he does not talk because he is not satisfied with what he says, and he is tired of life. A few days since he purchased a pistol to take his own life, but it was taken from him before he made any attempts. He is a stout, hale, full grown young man, his head is of good size and well formed, his motions easy and graceful, his speech natural. He eats rather sparingly, is anxious to get well, and willing to adopt any means recommended for his cure.

The subject of educating demented persons is new, it is at present exciting much attention, and the results are looked for with deep interest. The brain in such cases may not be affected with organic changes, but only be in an extremely torpid or inactive state. Some such cases, after a long torpor in which all hope of recovery has been lost, have spontaneously come out of apparently the most forlorn condition, and been restored to health and mental soundness. So the idiot and congenital insane may have a brain capable of greater or less improvement, if persevering efforts are made to excite it to activity.

If *one* old case of insanity in *ten* can be restored to soundness of mind by the appliances of insane hospitals, should not all of this class have the benefits of such a trial? In a large proportion of these cases the physical health can be improved, perverted habits can be changed, and the mind be made to enjoy, in some degree, what it has been deprived of under the influence of long-continued and neglected disease. So if *one* idiotic or demented person can have his powers of mind rendered active by effort, and some degree of knowledge imparted to him by which his enjoyment and usefulness can be increased, even if *ten* fail of improve-

ment, it will be worth the effort in all. But the case is more favorable than this supposition allows. I have no doubt that nearly all can be improved physically and mentally, and that the experiment will be productive of much good. It is certainly worthy of the consideration of the Christian and the philanthropist.

ON ASCITES.

By C. J. B. Williams, M.D., F.R.S., &c.

WE now go on, from inflammatory affections, to *ascites*, which is a species of flux, or, more properly, dropsy of the abdomen. There is an increased secretion of serum, frequently to a great extent, and this we have found to be sometimes the result of chronic peritonitis; at other times, however, it is a consequence of disease, not of an inflammatory nature. It may arise from the sudden suppression of another flux, such as diarrhoea, or the stoppage of the catamenia. Sometimes, ascites occurs as a part of general dropsy, from disease of the heart or imperfect action of the kidneys, or a general cachectic state. More commonly, ascites arises from an obstruction to the return of the blood from the abdominal vessels, as in disease of the liver. In such case, it is frequently unaccompanied by any considerable swelling of the legs or other parts of the body. The usual symptoms are: swelling of the abdomen, attended by fluctuation, and a dull sound in the most dependent parts, but the position of this varies; where there is a slight degree of effusion, the fluid in the abdomen may be best felt in the sitting or standing posture, in the pubic and iliac regions. It may be felt by the usual process for ascertaining the presence of fluctuation, by pressing the hand on the abdomen on one side, and gently tapping on the other; each stroke from the finger is followed by a movement of the fluid, which is impelled onwards to the opposite side. There must be some quantity of liquid to effect this. It very frequently happens that the intestines, or some of the solid contents, fall down to the middle part of the abdomen, and cut off the communication between the two sides; and, therefore, though there is a considerable quantity of fluid, you get no fluctuation. In that case, you may ascertain it by pressing the hand on the lower part of the abdomen, and adopting the process on a smaller scale. There may, however, be a source of error here; the soft parts do not fluctuate; but, where there is a solid tumor, there is a sort of fluctuation induced. I have been deceived in this manner, repeatedly, and no very correct idea can be obtained by percussion. If you strike the abdomen high up, a fluctuation or tremulous motion is propagated to the finger; the same thing is found with a tumor, such as the enlarged liver or spleen, and, on one occasion, I was thus led to mistake an enlarged spleen, of enormous size, for a tumor in the ovarium. The same thing will occur when you try fluctuation between bodies at a short distance; and it is difficult to say, where the walls of the abdomen are thick, or where there is a considerable amount of soft or fatty matter, whether such fluctuation is the result of the liquid

or of the solid matter. The best mode of distinction, therefore, for small quantities of liquid, is, certainly, the sound on percussion, as I pointed out in speaking of chronic peritonitis. In this manner you may readily displace a small quantity of liquid by pressure. You will find, in these cases, the lower part of the abdomen to sound dull on percussion; but, if you press inwards, you get rid of a quantity of liquid, and come in contact with the intestines; and, therefore, the difference of forcible percussion, and of gentle percussion, will enable you to distinguish the presence of liquid. Hence, you find, when pressure is not employed, that there is a dull sound on percussion, but by pressing on the parts, and then percussing, there is a clearer sound, and this is a pretty sure proof of liquid being present in the lower part of the abdomen; this may be ascertained by the patient standing; and, in order to get the liquid in front, the patient should be desired to lean forward. This plan is also available for making fluctuation more distinct, or perceptible, in other cases. The same practice may be applied to the flanks, and I have been enabled, in many instances, to announce the commencement of ascites, before many others could detect it by fluctuation. Another mode of diagnosis between ascites and ovarian tumor—between liquid in the peritoneal, and liquid in the ovarian, sac—is important to be noticed; its distinction is, however, very easy. Ovarian tumors begin low down, on one side, gradually rising up, and, when they occupy a great extent of the abdomen, the dullness will be found to be more defined, and will extend higher up; below, there is a sort of tympanitic sound of the intestines, which are pushed aside by the tumor. In ascites, it will be more in the dependent parts, that there will be dullness—towards the pubic region; and, if there is any resonance at all, it will be perceived towards the umbilicus, and in the pit of the stomach. On the contrary, in ovarian tumor, the chief dullness will be in the central portion of the abdomen, whilst the intestinal resonance will be in the flanks. In some instances, however, of very advanced ascites, the fluid may be so extensive as to cover the intestines completely over, so that the abdomen is dull in every region, both behind and before; but, such cases are unusual; and, even then, by pressing inwards, as far as the walls will allow, and using strong percussion, the tympanitic sound may usually be heard towards the umbilicus. There are cases of adhesion of the intestines to the sides, so that they cannot be displaced by liquids. Under such circumstances, although dropsy be present, there will be a degree of resonance on percussion, along the tract of the intestines. In most cases, ascites is accompanied by a scanty and turbid condition of the urine, which is also high colored, or else, in many instances, it is impregnated with albumen. It is, not unfrequently, also connected with disease of the kidney; and you must remember that ascites, or dropsy of the peritoneal sac, may be dependent on some other causes, of which there will be found signs: for instance, a person will be suddenly attacked with swelling in the abdomen, on the suppression of some discharge. The disease is, here, somewhat of an inflammatory character, and, not unfrequently, if it remain unsubdued, anasarca will take place. In ascites from diseased liver, there is, generally, some local sign of hepatic disease,

Sometimes attacks of jaundice, or bilious affections, occur, and the intestinal and urinary evacuations show, more or less, symptoms of disorder. The ascites must be diminished or removed, before we can determine the exact position of the liver. In many cases of ascites, the enlargement of the liver may be felt by pressing the hand on the right side, or using gentle percussion; this presses away the fluid, and you then find some resisting body in that direction. Extensive ascites will impinge on the region of the chest, and cause some of the signs of disease of the thoracic organs; the tumor, pressing up the diaphragm, will produce imperfect respiration, or interfere with the due performance of this function. In other cases, there will be symptoms of something like hypertrophy of the heart, this organ being thrown forwards against the chest. You judge of this by the amount of swelling. There is yet another cause of ascites to be noticed, and that is a curious one: it is—obliteration of the ascending cava; in a few instances, in which this has been observed, not only ascites of the belly, but, likewise, dropsy of the lower extremities, have been remarked as a consequence; obstruction of the vena cava inferior, or of a portion of the vena portæ, generally leads to ascites.

The *treatment* will depend very much on the cause. When it arises from simply suppressed excretion, it may require general depletion, or cupping over the region of the loins. The chief medicinal remedy, in these cases, is elaterium, in small doses; or cream of tartar, in doses of from half an ounce to an ounce, taken the first thing in the morning, and sometimes combined with jalap; after this, diuretics may be given; but the greater portion of these are of no use, until the main symptoms are reduced, and, often, such medicines are found merely to irritate, instead of doing good. Sometimes a warm bath is useful, particularly where the disease is connected with suppressed perspiration, and a dry state of the skin. In cases of diseased liver, or diseased heart, or both, mercurials, combined with diuretics, answer best: such as squills and colchicum, digitalis, tincture of cantharides, cream of tartar, spirits of juniper, tincture of horse-radish, acetate of potash, iodide of potassium, &c.; these two last may, sometimes, be combined together. Blisters to the abdomen are also of great efficacy, in some cases of low inflammation of these parts. If the ascites be extensive, and the above medicines produce but little impression, hydragogue purgatives sometimes cause copious evacuations, but they exhaust, rather than relieve, the system. Diuretics do no good; and, then, we must have recourse to tapping, which gives present relief, and is further useful, inasmuch as other remedies are then enabled to act with more freedom. It is on these occasions, that we are often, for the first time, enabled to examine the abdomen clearly, and to make out the diagnosis. In the same way, we may be guided to the use of mercury, if the disease be in the liver; or of iodine, if there is any enlargement of the general glandular system. After tapping has removed the fluid, a tumor may still remain in the abdomen, and this may then be found to depend on an enlarged ovary. Sometimes it is the liver which is enlarged; or, again, it may be the spleen. In all these cases, iodide of potassium has been known to exercise very good effects.—*London Medical Times.*

MUSTARD POULTICES APPLIED EXTENSIVELY TO THE SURFACE.

By William O. Baldwin, M.D., of Montgomery, Alabama.

THE application of poultices as a remedial agent in many forms of local inflammations, spasmodic pains, &c., has long been practised and highly appreciated, as not the least efficacious among the many sanative agents available in such cases. By some they have been and are still used with reference solely to the specific virtues of the substances of which they are composed, whilst others esteem them all for their one common virtue—attributing to them no other curative effect than that which arises from their capability of retaining warmth and moisture about the parts to which they are applied. Both of these views, as to their *modus operandi*, are probably correct; for the results which follow the endermic use of medicine undoubtedly establish the truth of the former; while all can attest the good results which are frequently obtained from the application of *simple* poultices to inflamed and painful parts, which of course can be attributed to nothing more than the relaxation afforded by the warmth and moisture which they contain. It is for this property of the poultice, added to the increased revulsive effect of the mustard, when combined, that I propose to extend their use to acute diseases, involving the whole animal economy.

From the marked success which has attended the application of mustard poultices to the entire, or greater portion of the surface of the body and extremities, in the treatment of some diseases of an idiopathic character, I am disposed to regard them as a remedy of more value than their hitherto partial use would seem to indicate; for although highly esteemed and extensively employed in certain *local* affections, so far as I am aware their application has been restricted to such diseases, or when used in those involving a greater extent of tissue they have been applied only to combat some local symptom.

The experience which I have had with the mustard leads me to look upon it as a remedy peculiarly applicable to diseases of a congestive type, and more especially to *congestive fever*. I have found it a most prompt and available remedy in one or two instances in which I have used it in *convulsions* occurring in children; and I have also applied it advantageously in some cases of *visceral inflammation*. In a case of *trismus nascentium* in which I used it, there was a considerable abatement of the disease under its influence; but as the violent symptoms afterwards returned and the case terminated fatally, it cannot be considered as furnishing any testimony in support of its efficacy in that class of diseases. I believe, however, that if my directions had been carried out during the 12 hours of remission and comparative ease which the little sufferer seemed to enjoy immediately after the application of the poultice, which would have brought it fully under the influence of opium, it might have succeeded. That, however, is a bare supposition; but I was so well pleased with the effect which followed its application, that, though the case proved fatal, taking into consideration the very unsatisfactory results

which have generally followed the treatment of that disease, I shall test its efficacy further should a suitable occasion offer.

From its powerful agency in producing diaphoresis, that end so often coveted in the treatment of *synochal fevers*, I am induced to believe the mush poultice, with or without the mustard, applied in this way, might form a valuable adjuvant in the treatment of that class of diseases.

These remarks are not intended to depreciate the value of free internal medication. Indeed, in most of the cases in which I have used the poultice it has been in conjunction, or at least not to the exclusion of any other remedy which might have been thought available—so that one who may be disposed to cavil, might with some plausibility dispute its agency in producing the beneficial results which I have ascribed to it. Nevertheless, in a great majority of cases in which I have resorted to it, in the diseases alluded to, its effect has been so apparent, that notwithstanding the administration of other remedies, at the same time, no one could mistake its promptly favorable influence. And it frequently happens that our only means of making an impression upon the disease is through the agency of external applications. As, in *cerebral congestions* attended with coma and insensibility, it is always difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to administer medicines internally—in such cases the mustard poultice is entitled to the very first and highest consideration, as the remedy most likely to produce the desired objects.

Though this is a remedy of most singular simplicity, yet a few remarks as to the mode which I have adopted, both in its preparation and application, may not be considered inappropriate.

Supposing the patient to be an adult of the ordinary physical proportions—boil about a bushel of meal to a tolerably consistent mush, and spread upon a sheet which has been placed on a wide mattress, the mattress lying on a low bedstead. The mustard, which should be prepared in the mean time, by mixing three bottles with meal, in the proportion of one part of the former to five or six of the latter, and made into a thin batter by the addition of hot water, is then poured over the mush, and the whole covered by a thin sheet. The patient is then placed about the middle of the poultice, the sides of which are folded over him—completely enveloping every part except the head. The mustard applied in this way is rendered much more active, and will redden the skin when diluted in this way to one sixth of its strength, almost as soon as cataplasms of unmixed mustard, and much quicker when applied to cool or cold extremities—consequently, if applied without being blended with some farinaceous substance it would be very likely to produce vesication.

When enveloped in this way, I have never allowed any patient to remain longer than from a quarter to half an hour, but have been governed as to the length of time which they were allowed to remain altogether by the impression made upon the disease, and see no reason why they should not be kept on a much longer time, if necessary; for, when combined with the mustard in this way, it is much less apt to produce a feeling of faintness and debility than the warm bath. It will sometimes be found inconvenient to use the poultice in this way, for want of proper and ne-

cessary appliances; in the cases of young men, for instance, living in counting-houses and other places where they have but few conveniences. In such instances a less troublesome mode, and one which I have practised in a few instances, is to envelope each limb separately and cover completely the chest and abdomen, from the neck to the pubis, with the poultice prepared in the same way, and spread on large towels. The former mode is much the most powerful, and when practicable, is to be preferred; but I have found the latter to answer a very good purpose in some instances, and from the fact that it can be borne for a much longer time, and with less annoyance to the patient, I think, perhaps, it might be equally efficacious in cases of a less urgent description.

In illustration of these views, I will append a few cases which occurred in my practice, and in which I used the poultice, prepared in the manner described above.

[We omit Dr. B.'s cases. They are four in number, and the patients were of different ages, and suffering under different diseases.]

In a case of *congestive* fever, treated successfully, but which is too tedious to detail at length, I kept the extremities enveloped, and the chest and abdomen covered with the mustard poultices, for 48 hours—re-applying them every 4 or 5 hours.

In the treatment especially of those diseases which depend upon a want of balance in the circulation, and when the structural lesion is not very extensive, the mustard poultice, used as I have recommended it, if not in itself a curative remedy, will, at least, frequently be found a powerful adjuvant.—*Western Medical Journal*.

SINGULAR CASE OF RETAINED FOETUS.—CYSTITIS IN A COW.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

To the Corresponding Secretary of the National Institute, Washington.

DEAR SIR,—In October last I received from you a notice of my having been elected a corresponding member of the National Institute, and beg leave to take this opportunity of expressing my acknowledgment of the honor thus bestowed; and though my "aid in carrying out the objects of the Institute" may be very feeble, such as I can give, from time to time, will be cheerfully rendered.

At present I propose to report to you a case of considerable interest, and of uncommon occurrence, which has come within the range of my practice.

On Sunday morning, the 23d of April last, I was called to see Mrs. Fletcher, who, it was said, had been in labor since the afternoon of the preceding Friday. I found her in an extremely feeble condition: skin cool; pulse small and quick; complaining of excruciating pain in the abdomen (particularly on the right side) whenever she was moved; and unable to lie upon the left side more than a few moments at a time, in consequence of the severe pain thereby produced in the right. She also complained of nausea, and of considerable soreness and burning at the epigas-

trium. The labor pains had ceased for some eight or ten hours ; the head of the child was not in reach ; and the os uteri was high up, and nearly closed, though soft.

The following history of the case was obtained from herself and attendants. On Friday she had eaten pretty heartily of turnip salad, which gave her a violent colic, to which affection she has been long subject. In the course of the afternoon, labor pains came on, and a colored midwife was sent for, who told her everything was going on well, and that the child would soon be born. She continued to suffer very violently until Saturday forenoon, when she threw up the salad, which gave her a good deal of relief. Whenever it was proposed to send for a physician, the midwife assured them that there was no necessity ; that the child would be born before one could be procured. During Saturday evening the midwife herself became impatient, and said the delay was owing to the child lying too much on the right side ; and in order to remedy this defect, she raked that side down violently with both hands, which gave the patient very great pain, and, to use her own language, made her eyes strike fire ; and produced such agony that she swooned, and continued unconscious of what was going on around her, until the next morning.

She informed me that she was only eight months gone with child ; and from facts stated by her, I have no doubt of the correctness of her calculation. I could not ascertain, satisfactorily, whether the liquor amnii had been discharged or not, but it was her impression and that of the midwife that it had. There had been some hemorrhage, at which the patient was a good deal alarmed, and it continued in a small degree when I saw her, but was easily checked. The motion of the child had not been felt since the injury done by the midwife.

As she was costive I prescribed gently opening medicines, to be followed by a mild anodyne ; cups to the epigastrium, and afterwards a blister ; fomentations to the abdomen, with perfect rest and the mildest nourishment. As the pains did not return, I left her in the evening, with directions to send for me if they should do so. In about 24 hours I was sent for, as she supposed the labor had returned ; but it was a false alarm. The hemorrhage having increased a little, acetate of lead was prescribed, which stopped it. There was another false alarm on the 26th, accompanied with an increase of the discharge. A slight draining continued at intervals, until the 15th of June, when I was sent for on account of its increase, from an attempt to get up, and some return of colic. The abdomen was then much reduced in size, but there had been none other than the bloody discharge, and no unpleasant odor about the patient. I called to see her again early in October : her general health had gradually improved, but she had not yet left her bed excepting to sit up in a chair. The discharge had, for some time past, assumed the appearance of being menstrual, but was more free, and returned at rather shorter intervals. The womb had contracted very much, and felt like a hard cake eight or nine inches in diameter, which reached from the false ribs to the pelvis on the right side ; its left border extending two or

three inches beyond the umbilicus. Its surface was closely adherent to the wall of the abdomen on the right, for a considerable space, so that when the patient laid upon her left side, it did not move its position at all. There was still some soreness when pressure was made upon the adherent portion, or when reclining upon the opposite side. No offensive discharge had taken place. I advised her gradually to accustom herself to the use of her feet and legs, as she had not done so, and had lost their use.

On the 1st of January, instant, I called again to see her. She had recovered her ability to walk, and had been attending to her domestic concerns, her general health and strength being much improved. Her stomach was still weak, which compelled her to exercise much prudence in eating. From an indiscretion in this respect, she had had an attack of colic some weeks before, which had increased the periodical discharge from the womb, and given it something of a hemorrhagic character. Since this last accident, she had only had a week's interval of *entire* exemption from discharge; it was not free, however, but a portion of the time. The tumor had lessened, in some measure, since my visit in October. It is now from seven to eight inches (measured by my span) in diameter, and flat upon the surface. There is less soreness upon pressure, but the patient frequently feels little sharp pricking pains where it is adherent. There is still no offensive discharge.

Mrs. Fletcher is the wife of a laborer; she is about 35 or 40 years of age, and the mother of eight children. Her previous labors were without serious difficulty or accident. She has a dark and sallow complexion; is probably of a bilious temperament; and of a family inclined somewhat to consumption. There can be no doubt that her case is one of genuine pregnancy. It was attended in the first months with the same signs which had accompanied her other pregnancies; and from the period of quickening to the time of her accident, she had felt the motions of the fœtus as distinctly and frequently as in any other. The head of the child was also felt by the midwife.

I shall continue to observe this case from time to time; and if I live to witness its final issue, will report it to the "Institute." There is one striking coincidence (and the only one) in this case and the one reported by my friend, Dr. T. Miller, which was published in the *Medical Examiner* of October 29th, 1842, viz., the inflammation of the peritoneum, and the adhesion of the womb to the parietes of the abdomen.

I have recently heard of several cases of retained fœtus in different animals, that were attended with no permanent injury to the constitution. The first was related to me by Col. J. W. Ware (of Clarke County) of a cow that belonged to his overseer, and had ceased breeding for six years, and becoming very fat, the Colonel was induced to purchase her for a beef. At the request of her former owner, who was curious to know why she had become barren, when she was killed the Colonel examined her, and found in her womb the bones of a calf and a large quantity of purulent matter. The second is that of a sow that belonged to one of my near neighbors. Having become barren, she was fattened and killed, and in her womb were contained the bones of a litter of pigs. The third was that of a hare

that was caught in February, 1841, by two gentlemen of this neighborhood. It was uncommonly large and fat, and had within it four young ones, in a state of decay, that had attained the full term of gestation. In neither of these cases was the cause ascertained that had prevented the birth at the proper time, and in neither was any discharge observed.

As the inquiries of the Institute are unlimited in nature and extent, it will not be thought impertinent for me to relate here, a case which has recently come under my notice, of extensive cystitis in a cow, which did not interfere with her general health.

In February last, one of my young Devon cows was discovered to be in difficult labor, which it was evident had continued some 12 or 18 hours. Upon examination, I ascertained that the difficulty was caused by a breech presentation, which is very bad in a cow, or a mare. Seeing that she suffered much, and that the labor made no progress, I passed a long and strong rope around the bend of each of the calf's hind legs, and gave each rope to two strong men, whilst others supported the cow. Repeated efforts were made in this way to effect the delivery, without the slightest result. I then attached a very strong and gentle horse to the ropes, who, in a short time, delivered the hind legs, and the rest was accomplished without difficulty. In this operation the cow was, necessarily, a good deal bruised; and continued feeble till spring. In the course of the summer she became very sleek and fat, but she had an incontinence of urine, and was constantly "bulling." She was killed in November; and feeling a curiosity to know the cause of the incontinence, I examined the organs concerned. The vagina was considerably injected, and just within the os externum there were several cicatrices, and some ulcers not entirely healed. The bladder contained no urine, but six or eight blackish lumps, which appeared to be concrete pus. The coats were about half an inch thick, and the mucous membrane was ulcerated throughout, being divided by numerous deep cracks, and fissures. The urethra was in the same situation. The sphincters, both of the neck and of the orifice of the urethra, were paralyzed and patulous, and their mucous covering *smooth* and highly injected. The womb was empty, and looked healthy externally, but I neglected to examine its internal surface.

Whether the human system would be capable of thriving with such a state of disease in the bladder, I have not had experience enough to enable me to determine; but I think it quite likely that under a proper system of diet, &c., much mucous disease might be endured in that organ for a long time.

I remain, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

"*The Plains*," Fauquier Co., Va.

ROBERT E. PEYTON.

MEDICAL MATTERS IN PHILADELPHIA.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

MY DEAR SIR,—When I saw you in December last, I think you requested me to give you my impressions of the medical institutions of Phila-

delphia—to which place I was then going to spend a few weeks in the hospitals and lecture rooms. By means of your kind letter of introduction to Prof. Pancoast, I soon formed a cordial and happy acquaintance with several of the medical faculty. By their kindness and courtesy I found ready access to the wards of the different hospitals, the operating theatres, the public and private lecture rooms, the museums and dissecting rooms. Indeed, a stranger soon finds himself perfectly at home in the midst of so much courtesy, refinement and good will as prevail in the professional circles of Philadelphia. To speak of all the interesting features of Philadelphia as *the great Emporium of Medical Science*, would perhaps be too great a tax upon my time and your patience. Of the learning, the eloquence and the skill of many of the Professors, I need not speak, as their fame is known world wide; and yet we can scarcely appreciate the talent and power of these gifted authors till in the lecture room, the clinique, or the operating theatre, the intrinsic excellence of their performances is scanned and tested. If a professor's fame be indeed factitious, it cannot long endure the scrutiny which would be brought to bear upon him by a class of 400 or 500 students. Hence the continued popularity of a professor is *prima facie* evidence that his department is well and acceptably taught. This remark is true not only of those veteran sages in medicine whose teachings have come to be almost oracular, but also is pre-eminently true of the younger and more modern luminaries of science who adorn some of the Philadelphia professorships. Of the latter, the Jefferson College can marshal a brilliant galaxy; men who bring not only genius, industry, talent and skill, but also eloquence, urbanity and refinement, to the discharge of their daily duties in the lecture room. The profound scientific acquirements of these men, united with a most thorough and pleasing mode of teaching, renders their increasing influence and popularity no mystery. To these men the American profession are every day becoming more and more indebted for their perseverance and success in rendering of practical utility the modern discoveries in chemistry and physiology, and the improvements in therapeutics and surgery. Their untiring zeal and brilliant success in these departments is well deserving that high meed of praise which is spontaneously bestowed by all who hear or witness their performances. In a word, Philadelphia offers the highest advantages to medical students. The amplitude and perfection of every facility for acquiring a thorough and accomplished professional education, is probably unsurpassed in America. The present number of students attending lectures in the city, you have probably learned from the catalogues.

I have now in preparation an article on the toxicological effects of some of the "Thomsonian medicines," which I may offer for your Journal if you consider the subject worthy of notice.

With great respect, your ob't serv't.

Ashby, Ms., Feb. 20, 1845.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK.

 THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

 BOSTON, MARCH 5, 1845.

Chemistry for Students.—Messrs. Ticknor & Co. some days since announced the contemplated republication of a new and instructive volume, from the pen of the distinguished Professor Gregory, who was recently elected to the chair of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh, vacated by the venerable Dr. Hope. Prof. Gregory has acquired an extensive reputation by his large work on Chemistry, besides some other scientific publications, and he now stands at the head of British chemists. His new book, a copy of which we have seen, is an admirable abridgement, and appears to us to be just what is wanted by medical students. It is to appear in Boston, under the editorial supervision of Prof. Webster, well known for his labors in the chair of Chemistry, at the University in Cambridge. Just such an assistant will find a market in the New England colleges. Every teacher of Chemistry, says Dr. Gregory, in the preface, must have felt the want of a compact text book, the price of which might place it within the reach of every student; and it is the "long felt source of this want, which has led me to compile these outlines." We learn, from good authority, that the large book of this author has quite superseded Turner's, which for many years has had high reputation. We feel no small degree of interest in the enterprise, from a conviction that chemistry is too much hurried over in medical schools; but the woful deficiency of guide-books, is something of an apology. Whenever the publishers have it ready for sale, we shall again advert to it.

Principles of Medical Jurisprudence.—This is a welcome volume. It embraces just so much of anatomy, physiology, pathology and the practice of medicine, says the title page, as are essential to be known by lawyers, coroners, magistrates, and officers of the army and navy, &c. Its author is Wm. A. Guy, M.D., Professor of Forensic Medicine in Kings' College, London. He is a man of vast industry, as this rich accumulation of facts in medical jurisprudence abundantly shows. Dr. C. A. Lee, of New York, has added 200 pages of original matter, to adapt the whole to the wants of the medical and legal profession in the United States.

We can do little more, the present week, than announce the appearance of this valuable treatise. We shall hereafter allude more particularly to the various subjects discussed by Dr. Guy. Copies are on sale at Messrs. Jordan, Swift & Wiley's, in this city.

Maine Insane Hospital in 1844.—Isaac Ray, M.D., an author of celebrity, is the medical superintendent of this institution, assisted by Horatio S. Smith, M.D. A report from the trustees is quite satisfactory respecting the financial condition of the institution. There were remaining in the hospital, Nov. 30th, 1844, 76 patients, viz., 50 males and 26 females. The greatest number, at any one time in the year, 79; the average num-

ber, 70. In looking over the Superintendent's report, it is found to be characterized by good sense, and just views of the principles which should influence a man in Dr. Ray's situation. Though he presents nothing in his mode of treatment particularly striking, there is a conviction on the mind of the reader that he is a profound medical inquirer, always solicitous to understand the language which nature addresses to him, even from the lips and conduct of the insane. Medical gentlemen are now so well agreed upon what the proper course of management should be with insane patients, that we do not expect the promulgation of any novel doctrines; indeed, an alarm would at once be excited by the introduction of new processes, much at variance with those now adopted. The law of humanity urges the curative treatment of lunatics; they are not placed in asylums to be victimized with useless doses of drugs. This is altogether a glorious age for our insane fellow beings; though truly unfortunate in their insanity, their lives have fallen in pleasant places when under the care of such men as now have the management of our lunatic asylums.

Indignation Meeting at the Transylvania Medical School.—An extra Observer and Reporter, from Lexington, Ky., brings intelligence of a numerous-attended meeting of medical students in that city, at which Mr. Treadwell, of South Carolina, presided. The object was to contradict certain assertions of Dr. Pinckard, who has been treating the news-hunters with his personal views and opinions in regard to the internal organization of the medical department of Transylvania University. Students appear not to have been as plenty as common this session, and the cause is imputed by these gentlemen, if we understand the extra, to the uncalled-for manifestos of Dr. Pinckard. The paper says, in plain words, that the doctor got soured in consequence of not being retained in the service of the State Lunatic Asylum. The circular sums up the sins of their literary foe in a summary manner, by declaring that "he is in pursuit of notoriety, without being mindful of its character or mode of acquisition; and all his thoughts and feelings are merged in one malicious intent—in one reckless design. He covets the downfall of our school, and would triumph in the event, merely because it would appease the anger he loves to cherish, particularly for two of its professors. We hope that the community abroad will discountenance his efforts and condemn his motives, as they are despised and abhorred by the people of Lexington. He is a man of no consequence at home, and he is not entitled to the influence he has acquired at a distance."

Surely, this is making pretty free with the doctor. The document from which this extract is made, is signed by K. F. Stewart, of Ohio; F. C. Thomas, Missouri; J. B. Hudson, Georgia; Wm. Garrard, Kentucky, and P. Franks, Kentucky. As two of them are neighbors, it is presumed they feel warranted in taking strong ground. Take it all in all, this is a singular aspect of affairs—a respectable body of students pitted against one man, who is firing his long guns into the very citadel which these juveniles would fain defend. The principle that animates them is commendable—the defence of the reputation of the medical school of which they are members.

Albany Medical College.—It is gratifying to witness the prosperity of the different Schools of Medicine. If they are too numerous, as many fully believe, it so happens, the present season, at least, that they are all abundantly stocked with patrons. Students are more numerous than ever, which only reminds us that there is an increase of population. One hundred and eleven names stand upon the catalogue of the Albany Medical College at the commencement of 1845. Those who are familiar with our medical schools, know very well that the Albany College came into existence under peculiar advantages. Sixteen thousand dollars have been given by the Legislature, alone, within the last four years, the whole of which has been judiciously expended in the purchase of anatomical preparations, chemical apparatus, books, and for improvements in the building. Dr. March's operations before the class have been numerous.

Vermont Medical College.—An apology is due the friends of this institution for not having earlier called the attention of students to its facilities for medical instruction. The fact is, we are so overrun at times with books, pamphlets, communications, and calls of various kinds, that we sometimes lose sight of something that was marked for immediate attention. Answers to private letters are sometimes delayed or omitted altogether from the same cause. The annual lectures in the Vermont College commence to-morrow, as will be seen by turning to the advertisement on the cover. Having the honor of a personal acquaintance with several of the faculty, we can truly say that they are gentlemen of experience, and have no superiors in rival schools. The new College edifice, together with its conveniences for pursuing anatomy, chemical manipulations, &c., shows the liberal policy of the trustees; and it is creditable to the State that so much talent is concentrated in the Medical College at Woodstock.

Students who leave this city, at the close of the term, would be in time for a course at Woodstock, and thus might advance themselves rapidly by matriculating there. We commend the institution to the consideration of an intelligent profession.

Mortality of the City of Lowell.—The bill of mortality for Lowell, during the last year, is made out in a manner creditable to the taste of David Wells, M.D., the official under whose eye the table is constructed. The whole mortality for the year was 362, being more than 100 less than in 1842. On the other hand, the deaths by consumption, which in the last-named year were 70, in 1844 were 77. The population of Lowell, in May, 1840, was 7,341 males, 13,740 females, total 21,081. In May, 1844, 9,432 males, 15,637 females, total 25,069.

"It will be seen," says Dr. Wells, "by comparing this with the bills of mortality of former years, that while our population has been increasing, the annual mortality for the last few years has been diminishing. Some of the probable causes were alluded to in the report of the city physician last year. The enlightened policy of the city government in directing the construction of common sewers, and the enterprise of individuals, in multiplying comfortable habitations, have doubtless contributed in no small degree to this desirable result. The establishment of a hospital, supported by the liberality of the corporations, for the accommoda-

tion of the sick in their employ, is believed to be another important agency. The more general diffusion of a knowledge of the laws of health is also conducive to the same end. And may we not hope that a more rational medical treatment, corresponding with other improvements of the age, has not been without influence?

"But while the general mortality is less, the younger portion of the community has suffered, during the last year, in an unusual degree. About five ninths of the deaths occurred in persons under ten years of age, and this without the prevalence of any unusual epidemic peculiar to that class. We are admonished by this fact, that whatever causes have been operating to ameliorate our condition, have not proved equally efficacious to them; and that much yet remains to be accomplished, in averting and removing disease."

The New York Journal of Medicine.—Charles A. Lee, M.D., of New York, favorably known for his untiring industry as a medical writer, has assumed the editorial care of the above-named Journal, which was projected and formerly conducted by the late Dr. Forry. Dr. Lee belongs to the school of energetic writers; he is never prosy, but sound, and always manifests a fairness that commands the respect of all classes of readers.

Singular Case of Luminous Breath.—A case has been reported to the Liverpool Pathological Society, which occurred in a Poor House near Liverpool, in which the patient, during twenty minutes before death, on the night of November 16th, emitted a luminous breath, which was compared by the attendant to a "red-hot coal-like streak on his mouth." The patient was 47 years old, had formerly been a drunkard, though he had taken no spirits for six weeks, had had hemorrhage of the bowels, and latterly anasarca, with cough and expectoration. The phenomenon was first noticed by the male nurse of the ward, who was much frightened by the appearance, and called to a man in a bed opposite to witness it. This man also saw the "red-hot" appearance on the dying man's cheek. Neither of them went up to the man while breathing continued, but when it ceased the nurse went and tied up his chin. Both of them were satisfied it could not have been caused by any reflection from the fire in the fire-place or from the gas jet which was burning very low. The two witnesses looked upon the matter as a moral rather than a medical one, and therefore did not mention it to the surgeon till the body was removed for interment, when it was too late for a *post-mortem* examination.

Poisoning by Lead.—It seems that the buck hounds belonging to the Queen of England have been suffering for two years with what is termed "kennel lameness." It has at length been pretty satisfactorily ascertained that this was caused by the water which supplied the kennel passing for a considerable distance through leaden pipes. On analysis, a pint of the water was found to contain two grains of solid matter, mostly carbonate of lead, not a particle of which could be detected in the water of the spring before reaching the leaden pipes. These pipes were accordingly all removed, and wooden ones substituted. Should the royal pack escape the attacks of lameness during the approaching hunting season, its cause will be abundantly proved, and an important truth confirmed by their means.

Grafton District (N. H.) Medical Society.—At the annual meeting of the Grafton District of the New Hampshire Medical Society, the following officers were chosen. C. B. Hamilton, M.D., Lyme, *President*; Mark R. Woodbury, M.D., Rumney, *Vice President*; Willard Hosford, M.D., Orford, *Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian*; Dixie Crosby, M.D., Hanover, Phineas Spaulding, M.D., Haverhill, Adoniram Smalley, M.D., Lyme, *Directors*.

Boylston Prizes.—We learn from the papers that the prizes for dissertations for this year were assigned by the committee to the following gentlemen:

First prize, to Mr. Frederick Howes, Jr. Salem, Mass., for a dissertation on "Scrofula."

Second prize, to Mr. Edward Hammond Clarke, Cambridge, Mass., for a dissertation on "Pneumonia."

Third prize, to Mr. Henry Augustine Martin, Boston, for a dissertation on "Hemorrhage from Arteries." Another third prize, to Mr. Jonathan Gilman Morse, Moultonboro', N. H., for a dissertation on "Cancer."

Insanity in New Jersey.—It has been stated that there were in New Jersey, in 1840, 415 insane persons and 200 idiots, and the number is at present much larger. From a public report on Jails and Poor Houses in the counties of Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester, Burlington and a part of Monmouth, it appears that there are in these counties 60 insane persons. One of the number has been crazy 17 years, and another nearly 30. One has been out of his small apartment but ten times in 19 years. He has been chained by the leg more than 20 years! and the only warmth introduced into his cell, is from a small stove pipe, which passes through one corner of it.

Blisters in Children.—Some discussion took place respecting the use of blisters in children. Generally, their employment was looked upon as only a choice of evils, and two cases were related in which their application produced fatal results. The president had found, in cases where blistered surfaces were healed with difficulty, that the mixture of a grain or two of opium with an ounce of spermaceti ointment was of great benefit. In cases in which morphia was employed endemically, the difficulty often was, to keep the blistered surface open.—*London Medical Society Report, in Lancet.*

St. Thomas's Hospital, London.—This royal and ancient institution has recently received the distinguished honor of adding to its list of governors his Royal Highness Prince Albert. A deputation, consisting of Sir John Pirie, the President, Mr. T. B. Burbidge, the Treasurer, and Messrs. William Pott and Edward Tyrrell, governors, attended by Mr. R. A. Wainwright, the Clerk of the Hospital, had an audience of the Prince on Friday last, at Windsor Castle, by appointment, when a splendidly illuminated copy of the resolutions of a special general court, electing his Royal Highness a governor, together with the green staff (in ac-

cordance with old established usage) and the customary charge to a governor, were read over, and presented to his Royal Highness, who received the same with his usual urbanity, and was pleased to express the interest which he felt in the institution, and his hope that his having become a governor might prove useful. A plan is in contemplation for re-building, when the funds will allow, the whole of the older portions of the building of this truly noble institution. This plan has been already partly carried into effect by the erection of the two magnificent wings abutting on Wellington street, which, besides the increased accommodation they afford to the sick, contribute in no trifling degree to the general effect of the southern approach to the new London-bridge. The hospital was founded by King Edward VI. in the year 1551.—*London Times*.

The Epizootic in Germany.—This very disastrous disease among cattle, originated in the plains of Russia, where it reigns epidemically. It is considered by the German veterinary surgeons to be a kind of contagious typhus. The various German states organized a strict quarantine on their frontiers, but without success, for it has invaded Prussia and Austria, where it is said to be making great ravages. It is much feared that the disease will spread over the whole of continental Europe. In the eighteenth century, several very fatal epizootics ravaged Europe from one end to the other. In 1754, such immense numbers of cattle were swept off, that several governments were obliged to forbid the destruction of any cattle capable of propagating the species.—*London Lancet*.

Medical Miscellany.—Dr. Charles Gordon, of Boston, on retiring from the command of a military company, was presented with a splendid case of surgical instruments.—Dr. Warren performed the severe operation of taking out a large part of the left upper jaw, at the Hospital, on Saturday, the 22d ult. The patient, a man of between 50 and 60, apparently, bore it well, and is, says report, recovering favorably.—Dr. Buck, of Boston, is urging on before the Legislature, a modification of the law to give greater facilities for anatomical pursuits.—A Dr. Cordew, of Bath, England, has offered a challenge of £1000 against £100 to the mesmerists there, that no clairvoyant could read a word securely closed in a Seidlitz powder-box. The challenge has been declined, the mesmerists refusing to allow Dr. C. to approach the clairvoyant during the experiments, or to agree to other means proposed by him as securities against deception.

MARRIED.—At Wrentham, Mass., Dr. Nathaniel Miller, of Franklin, to Miss S. Bond.

DIED.—At New York, by suicide, James S. S. Olcott, a medical student, belonging to Georgia, 27.—In East Hamilton, N. Y., of congestion of the lungs, Noah B. Foot, M.D., aged 67, formerly of North Branford, Conn.

Number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending March 1. 45—Males, 25; Females, 20.

Of consumption, 6—typhus fever, 2—influenza, 1—old age, 1—lung fever, 6—fits, 2—disease of the heart, 4—dropsy, 1—infantile, 4—worm fever, 1—disease of the spine, 1—marasmus, 1—epilepsy, 1— inflammation on the lungs, 3—liver complaint, 1—scarlet fever, 2—dropsy on the brain, 1—debility, 1—pleurisy, 1—accidental, 1—erysipelas, 1—croup, 1.

Under 5 years, 21—between 5 and 20 years, 7—between 20 and 60 years, 11—over 60 years, 6.

Operations during Sham Sleep.—With respect to the fact of a person submitting without moan or effort to have his teeth drawn, every one knows that some persons, be the cause what it may, suffer less pain from the process, or have nerve to bear it better than others. We see the same in all surgical operations. The other day a young woman had the operation of tracheotomy performed on her by Mr. Orr, in the City of Dublin Hospital, and during the entire operation not a moan, audible to the lookers-on, escaped her, nor a struggle requiring the slightest restraint was made by her. Now, had this girl been subjected to the manipulations of a mesmeric juggler, or had the medical men present been such simpletons as to co-operate with the promoters of these delusions, we should never have had an end of the rejoicings for such a crowning triumph of mesmerism.—*Dublin Medical Press.*

Rejection of Quack Advertisements.—A correspondent (M. R. C. S.) says, "I observe in the *Evangelical Magazine* for January (page 32), the following noble resolution of the proprietors, in reference to quack medicines:—'We will therefore cheerfully abandon, in future, the publication of all advertisements of quack medicines, which will be an act of homage to our own taste and judgment, no less than a concession to the strongly expressed opinions of some of our best friends, who, with ourselves, deeply deplore the disease and mortality occasioned by the nostrums of medical quacks, published daily in this great metropolis.' This honorable stand is made by a most extensively circulated journal, at a considerable pecuniary loss, for the smallest advertisement in that journal pays eight shillings and sixpence. It is to be hoped that other journals will follow the example; it is through the aid of newspapers and magazines that the quack succeeds in gulling the public. No small part of the moral turpitude rests on all who are the paid promulgators of the pernicious falsehoods which their fraudulent advertisements contain, promising to do what every scientific practitioner knows is impossible. The *Evangelical Magazine* deserves, for this act, the thanks of the profession.—*London Lancet.*

Liebig when a Boy.—Liebig was distinguished at school as "booby," the only talent then cultivated in German schools being verbal memory. On one occasion, being sneeringly asked by the master what he proposed to become, since he was so bad a scholar, and answering that he would be a chemist, the whole school burst into a laugh of derision. Not long ago, Liebig saw his old schoolmaster, who feelingly lamented his own former blindness. The only boy in the same school who ever disputed with Liebig the station of "booby," was one who could never learn his lessons by heart, but was continually composing music, and writing it down by stealth, in school. This same individual Liebig lately found at Vienna, distinguished as a composer, and conductor of the Imperial Opera House. I think his name is Reuling. It is to be hoped, that a more rational system of school instruction is now gaining ground. Can anything be more absurd or detestable than a system which made Walter Scott and Justus Liebig "boobies" at school, and so effectually concealed their natural talents, that, for example, Liebig was often lectured before the whole school, on his being sure to cause misery and broken hearts to his parents, while he was all the time conscious, as the above anecdote proves, of the possession of talents similar in kind to those he has since displayed.—*Phrenological Jour.*